

THE AUSTRALIAN



Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 101 No. 15, 9 September 1998

PRINT POST APPROVED PP349181/00418

OUR Father, which
art in heaven, Hal-
lowed be thy Name. Thy
kingdom come. Thy will
be done, in earth as it is
in heave us this
lay our daily bread. And
forgive us our trespasses.
As we forgive them that
trespass against us. And
lead us not into tempta-
tion; But deliver us from
evil. Amen

PRAYER



THE AUSTRALIAN

Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 101 No. 15, 9 September 1998

Editor: Don Smith, Production Manager/Sub Editor: Nigel Pegram
 Issue 14 October Deadline 1 October; Issue 28 October Deadline 15 October. Address for all correspondence: PO Box 101, Essendon North Vic. 3041. Telephone (03) 9379 1219, Fax (03) 9379 0015, E-mail <acdeditor@ozemail.com.au>, World Wide Web <www.ozemail.com.au/~acdeditor>. Member publication of the Australasian Religious Press Association. Published by the Board of Management of The Australian Christian, a Department of the National Conference of Churches of Christ in Australia. Keith Alrd, Chairman (SA); Lindsay Mott, Treasurer (Vic); John Batchler (Tas); Tom Glynn (NSW); Bev Grenfell (Old); Lea Nelson (ACT); Allen Smyth (WA). Printed by New Litho Pty Ltd, Surrey Hills Vic. Responsibility for electoral material is accepted by Don Smith, 2 Larkspur Ave, Doncaster 3108. This publication is indexed in the Australasian Religion Index. ISSN 0004-8652. Advertising Rates: Displayed: \$6.00 per column centimetre, Classifieds: \$15.00 for the first 25 words and 25c for each additional word.



Editorial

Prayer Experiences

DON SMITH

Recently I took a walk in a local park. A kookaburra greeted me, and within minutes I was admiring the darting rosella parrots, our growing duck population and the blossom. It was easy to respond with the children's song "All things bright and beautiful". * But then it didn't seem quite as simple as that, as I fell to pondering the mysteries of creation, which easily enough emerge from a pleasant walking experience in the last week of winter. I am constantly overwhelmed with a sense of wonder and awe at the complexities of the natural world. * Each of us will know something of this experience. My response of faith is one of adoration, leading on to thanksgiving. This is one experience of prayer. * The whole dynamic of prayer has recently been much examined in the light of contemporary disciplines such as psychology. We have learned from psychology and the study of personality types that individuals are likely to respond to experiences of prayer in quite different ways. In the church, the issue of spirituality has been to the fore. Within the Christian tradition, good experiences have been reclaimed from the past. For those committed to a quest for individual awareness and experiences of prayer, there is much to offer by way of new experiences, ideas, resources, retreats and the like. * The challenge is for each of us to try to deepen our experience of prayer. We should not feel guilty if we are still novices or if prayer is something on the edge of our experience. * In the park, my experience of prayer began with adoration and thanksgiving. Two further dimensions are confession and supplication. Each of us will be needing the first and supplication arises readily amid our concerns. Prayer for healing is often a part of supplication. Bruce Epperly in *The Disciple* recently wrote, "Authentic healing may mean recovery from illness or remission from a life-threatening disease, but it also may mean a peaceful death in the companionship of friends and awareness of God's love". I find that helpful. But now let me commend to your prayer Churches of Christ leaders nationwide, that they may have vision, insight, boldness and passion to discern and proclaim the Gospel with apostolic power. *



FREE Gospel of Mark

Have you ever wondered how, in today's busy world, you can have extra time to read God's word?

The **New International Version of Mark** is now available on cassette ... but with a difference. **It's recorded in Australia!**

For your free, easy-listening copy of Mark, just fill in this coupon and return to CBMI.

Copyright International Bible Society © 1984

Please send me a free copy of the New International Version of Mark on cassette.


PLEASE PRINT CAREFULLY

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss

Full Name

Address

..... P/code

 **CBMI** 1245 Burke Road
Christian KEW VIC 3101
Blind Mission Ph 03 9817 4566
International



A child needs you, as an Australian Christian, to be part of the compassion difference



You can bring a child love, hope and a future in Jesus's name through your gift of just \$32 a month (fully tax-deductible). That's enough to make a major difference in the child's life, through:

- Discipleship in the Christian Gospel through the child's local church
- Health care
- Education and skills training
- Development of social skills

The benefits to the child flow through to the family, church, school and community, helping bring new hope to all. The work of Compassion Australia is carried out by loving, compassionate Christians whose care and commitment ensure a high standard of integrity as stewards of your contribution.



Call 1 800 029 725 now or send the coupon today



Churches of Christ **federal aborigines board inc.**

Unit 4, 7 Baretta Road (PO Box 1199), Wangara WA 6065
Telephone (09) 309 3922. Fax (09) 309 4101. E-mail cofcfab@msn.com.au

Your support will assist the ongoing practical ministry of –
EVANGELISM

SOCIAL WELFARE

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

ADVOCACY

ENCOURAGEMENT

TRAINING

CRISIS AND AGED CARE

Amongst Aborigines — increasingly by Aborigines

Donations of \$2.00 and more are tax deductible.

YES! I wish to sponsor a needy child. Please send me a sponsor information pack, including a photograph of a child who needs me. I prefer to sponsor a Boy Girl

Bankcard Visa MasterCard

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Rev/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Group/Other title

Signature of cardholder _____

Name _____

Expiry date ___/___

Address _____

Please debit my card once monthly

_____ Postcode _____

Telephone (____) _____

I enclose a cheque of \$____ for ___ months, based on 32 a month, OR Please debit my:

Compassion
AUSTRALIA

Box 1 Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310

THE AUSTRALIAN
Christian



If undeliverable return to
PO Box 101
ESSENDON NORTH VIC 3041

Print Post Approved
PP349181/00418

892
R Edwards
106 Campbell Hill Rd
CHESTER HILL NSW 2162

**SURFACE
MAIL**

Postage
Paid
Australia

Have you moved?

If so, please fill in your new address details below and return this complete wrapper to us at the above address.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Church: _____

**Introduce Your Friends to an
Australian Christian**



We would be happy to send them three issues on a trial basis. Simply fill in their details below (with their permission) and send this form to, The Australian Christian, PO Box 101, North Essendon Vic 3041.

Name

Address

Postcode

Contents

Letters to the Editor

Prayer

Our writers look at various aspects of prayer.

<i>What Happens When We Pray?</i>	10
<i>Prayer in the Local Church</i>	11
<i>The Prayer of Silence</i>	12
<i>Unanswered Prayer</i>	13
<i>Prayer Vigils</i>	15

News

<i>National Aged Care Network</i>	5
<i>Wollongong Floods</i>	6
<i>Indonesian Persecution</i>	6
<i>Tops Staff</i>	7
<i>Making News</i>	7
<i>Burmese Refugees</i>	7
<i>Remember Reservoir</i>	8
<i>Swan Hill Induction</i>	8
<i>Moyes Stays</i>	9
<i>Missionaries Set Free</i>	9

Regulars

<i>A World View</i>	16
<i>Editorial</i>	2
<i>Exploring the Day</i>	20
<i>Media Matters</i>	17
<i>The Last Word</i>	20
<i>Thinking Biblically</i>	18
<i>Update</i>	4

The Australian Christian welcomes letters from its readers. Short letters up to 175 words stand the best chance of publication. All letters may be edited. We reserve the right to omit letters altogether.

there putting forth the Christian viewpoint, and I wish him God's blessing and every success in the future.

—Nancy Souness
(Sutherland, NSW)

One Nation

To the Editor,
The Birth of the One Nation Party has been brought about by the fear, anger, frustration and disillusionment of many Australians with the present party systems continually going on personal attack rather than governing the country.

I read with interest the success of Bill Feldman at the Queensland election, in particular his request for prayer for his new work. My sentiments at first were like those early letters ("AC" 22.7.98). However, on reflection I wonder if criticism is the way for Christians to go, no matter how violently we oppose positions of extreme. No matter what is done and said to the One Nation Party, that group will and can only be changed from within, and our brother asks for prayer.

I have more faith in the power of the Gospel of Christ to change us and our nation than any other organisation. God has called many in the past for special tasks, and if our brother has that calling we should pray for him, write to him, encourage him with the love of Christ who changes us all from within.

—Ken Collins
(Victor Harbor, SA)

Pawar Visit

To the Editor,
By the grace of God we had a wonderful and blessed time in different cities of Australia in our recent visit. It was great to meet so many people, along with those who were missionaries in India in earlier years.

We met with over 25 churches and groups in 35 days and were excited to visit public and private hospitals, one hospice and Churches of Christ homes for older persons.

We found much appreciation of the work being done at the Ashwood Memorial Hospital at Daund. I was moved when numerous older members told about their "penny" contributions which they made in their childhood as Sunday School children at the time when the late Dr George Oldfield served at the hospital.

We give thanks for such wonderful giving and prayer support for the hospital through the years. We shall value the continuing support and prayer of your readers.


—Dr Philemon Pawar
(Daund, India)

One Nation

To the Editor,
I was most interested, indeed most impressed to read Vin Waters' reply ("AC" 12.8.98) re One Nation letters ("AC" 22.7.98), for he wrote what would have been very much like my reply, had I put pen to paper. It is indeed good to know that Bill Feldman will be in

World Mission

To the Editor,
To quote Bob Smith, "Mission is high on our list of priorities". ("AC" 24.6.98). Mission is alive and well in Churches of Christ, but I fear that we, like most other western churches, are pitching our defini-

THE AUSTRALIAN  **Christian**

SUBSCRIPTION FORM PO BOX 101, NORTH ESSEDOON 3041

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED:\$ _____ CHURCH _____

PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY AMEX, BANKCARD, VISA OR MASTERCARD

PLEASE CHARGE MY—

AMERICAN EXPRESS BANKCARD VISA MASTERCARD

NUMBER

EXPIRY DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

NEW \$10 REST OF YEAR \$40 TILL END OF NEXT YEAR

RENEWAL \$32 FULL YEAR \$60 TWO YEARS

Letters to the Editor

tion of "mission" far too narrowly. Western imperialism of the last century and early 20th century facilitated the modern missionary movement.

Then came the post-modern, post-Christian era where Christianity was replaced in the west by secularism and pluralism as the key religious concepts. As Bob Smith puts it, "enormous changes within society ... have made the church increasingly peripheral and have caused considerable struggle for us as we try to grapple with mission issues".

As a member of the national Missions Interlink I am all too aware of this struggle within the Australian church. We have sought to address the problem of the widening missions "black hole" in our Christian communities. A whole generation is growing up in a world that says there is no future for the planet. Is it any wonder that Generation X expresses little concern for world mission?

Bob Smith's comment sums up succinctly the current mission mind set of the local church—**social concern!** We have retreated several continents in order to concentrate on "my world"—a few city suburbs or a single country town. Teeming masses overseas are way out of our depth! Leave them to the mission agencies—which, needless to say, are attract-

ing fewer Australians to their ranks.

As Peter Wagner states, for the Christian, world mission is not optional. Involvement in world mission is our Biblical mandate!

—John Wicks
(Caboolture, Qld)

One Nation

To the Editor,

I was somewhat intrigued by the three negative responses to Bill Feldman and One Nation ("AC" 22.7.98). I have come to understand that the Christian principle is that the accused has the opportunity to face the accuser, with the aim of having the opportunity to defend the accusation. Therefore, failing any direct accusations, we have to assume that these negative responses come from emotional prejudices, rather than fact and truth.

A foundation slogan of our movement is, "In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, liberty". It is essential that we stand for truth and righteousness, otherwise political ideologies are our liberty. Unless it can be proved that One Nation disregards truth and righteousness (regardless of propaganda) any more than the mainstream parties, then I will at least listen to what they have to say.

It would seem to me that Max Collyer has some difficulties with spiritual communion, for Jesus, at the inauguration of the fellowship

celebration, chose Judas as the honoured one among a group who were at odds with one another and with the cross at the coming dawn. The clear teaching of the first communion is that love is an act of the will, it is not to be based

on emotion. It is most significant that Simon, the political rebel, and Matthew, who was collecting taxes for Rome, sat down to lunch together.

—Tom Fraser
(Maitland, NSW)

Update

Dear Readers,

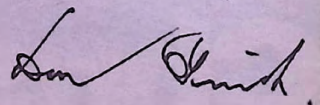
Our congratulations go to Michelle and Paul Andrews for receiving the "Booksellers Choice" award from the 1998 Australian Christian Book of the Year Awards for their children's publication *Will Anyone Listen to Me?* We work in close cooperation with the National Literature Department. It is good to be able to share in the achievement. Copies of their two books are available upon request at \$3.95 each, plus postage.

In October, Gordon Stirling will represent this paper at the Queensland Annual Ministers' Camp and the state Conference. He is looking forward to hearing your comments and discussing ideas for future issues. Gordon will be keen to enlist new subscribers and discuss promotional opportunities in your congregation. He hopes to meet someone from every

Queensland church. Please ensure that you speak with him.

We recently received news of the death of Lewis Park of Perth, WA. An article on his life is being prepared for publication in a forthcoming issue of the *Western Christian*.

The steady flow of "Letters to the Editor" continues. It is inevitable that letters are held over because of space limitations. Shorter letters are always easier to include. All reports to hand for the "Church News" section have been included. By contrast to the "Letters" the number received is unusually low. We welcome reports and can supply report forms upon request.



Volunteers Needed

**El Kanah
Guest House**
Marysville, Vic

Short or long-term, 4 days to work a week for keep, to assist in day-to-day running of the guest house, also garden maintenance. Church reference required.

Contact Lynne or Peter for more information
(03) 5963 3229 or (015) 309 528.

Pontius' Puddle



National Aged Care Network

Churches of Christ in Australia form Aged Care Network

The first meeting of the Network was held at "Paradise Country", Nerang, Qld, 15-17 July 1998. All states were represented. A decision was made to establish a formal network of Aged Care for Churches of Christ in Australia to be called the Churches of Christ Aged Care Network.

The Network will consist of a Churches of Christ Aged Care organisation from each state or territory (where they exist) and as determined by the Network. Each organisation will be represented by a small number of leaders from the organisation. Decisions will be made by consensus. The purpose of the Network is to

be a forum on issues related to Aged and Community Care. It will be supportive of Aged Care Australia or its successors as the representative body for care-provider organisations. It will consider and promote through Churches of Christ in Australia the Christian responsibility to ensure just, equitable and compassionate care for elderly Australians.

An annual forum will be held to determine representation on appropriate bodies, the preparation of submissions, consideration of national issues on education and training, and national fundraising. It was determined that there should be a national president



State representatives decide to form a national aged-care network for Churches of Christ

appointed for a two-year term, and that the secretariat should be taken up by the host State for the annual forum. Trevor Giles, Ex-

ecutive Director Churches of Christ Community Care, Vic-Tas, was chosen as the first national president.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY WORKERS COMPENSATION DIRECTOR'S AND OFFICER'S LIABILITY

FIRE AND PERILS

HOME AND CONTENTS

EQUIPMENT FAILURE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST PROVIDENT FUND—NO. 1 FUND

announces the appointment of

Rupert Taylor Insurance Consultant Pty Ltd

as

Insurance Consultant Coordinator

OUR ADVISORY STATEMENT

is for

Church Treasurers

The expenditure on insurance premiums will cost less for your church when placed with Rupert Taylor Insurance Consultant Pty Ltd.

Your transactions will be underwritten by QBE Insurance Limited. Commissions will be shared with the Preacher's Provident Fund No. 1 Fund. Premiums will remain with an Australian underwriter and will be invested in Australia.

When renewal notices are received, simply telephone

Rupert Taylor

on

1800 023 270

Jim Ashley
Secretary

Lyn Carr
Office Manager

DESTRUCTION CAUSING LOSS OF OFFERINGS GLASS BREAKAGE

PUBLIC LIABILITY PRODUCTS LIABILITY VOLUNTARY WORKERS COVER BURGLARY MONEY LOSS

Wollongong Floods

The personal side of a natural disaster



Ted Keating, Minister of Wollongong church reports on the recent floods

Keith McKay, a retired ship's engineer, had spent most of his life afloat, but this was the first time he had been afloat in his car. He was returning home from the Wollongong Church of Christ and decided the little stream across O'Brien's Road should not be a problem. It was. Keith felt his little car picked up by the raging torrent and pushed vigorously to the side of the road. Unable to open the door, he climbed out the window and just made it to safety. His car was stopped by a fence that originated from a house several metres upstream. Florence Hamilton, aged 91, almost found her bed afloat. She heard the water sloshing around her bedroom, got out of bed and went, waist-deep in water, to the front door. "I seemed to be there for hours before anybody heard me. I have never been so frightened in my life." In ten minutes, Florence's compact and tidy unit had become a sea of mud. Frank and Rose Diggle were nervous because the nearby creek had already flooded in their back yard and they were watching it care-

fully. Frank noticed the water coming in the back door at the same time that Rose saw it coming in the front door. Five minutes later the water was up to their waist and everything in the house was ruined. Five minutes later and the water began to recede. The banging noise they heard outside was their floating car hitting the top of the car port. There are thousands of such flood stories around Wollongong. The carnage created by twelve inches of rain in three hours on Monday 17 August is impossible to describe. It is a tribute to well-trained emergency services that only one person lost his life in the disaster.

It was sad to observe some aspects of the clean up. The mud-soaked carpets and furniture being thrown onto trucks could be replaced. The family photos and other personal items being thrown on top of them could never be.

What about the churches? They were not generally used as temporary shelters. The pubs and the clubs fulfilled that role. Some of our people helped people find the necessary government aid. Clothing and food is being delivered. Churches of Christ Community Services have helped us care for some victims who have lost everything and teams of young peo-

ple from our Sydney churches helped some of the victims with the clean up.

The churches will be more active in the second phase of the clean up. When the mud is all gone, walls are repainted and families are getting by with their second-hand furniture and clothes, emotional realities will hit. Then the counselling services provided by the churches, including the Church of Christ, will be stretched to the full.

The calls from our churches around the country and the offers of practical and prayer support have all been greatly appreciated.

Indonesian Persecution

Ted Bjorem reports after his recent visit to Indonesia

Ted Bjorem, minister at Gatton, Qld, church returned from Indonesia 13 August. He reports a radical Muslim group in East Java is marking homes of Chinese Indonesians with signs indicating specific acts of violent persecution to be taken against families. Many Chinese are Christians. Prayer is sought for this critical situation.

Youth Pastor

Glen Eira Christian Community Church, Vic
(a member of the Baptist family of churches)

A challenging and rewarding opportunity exists for a young adult with a passion for youth ministry to equip and guide young people in their vision to impact our community's youth for Christ.

The person we are seeking will:

- * Have a growing heart for God and sensitivity to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- * Demonstrate vision, leadership and pastoral gifts.
- * Invest primarily in the lives of youth leaders as a basis for spiritual and numerical growth.

This is initially a part-time (0.4) position. A ministry profile is available upon request.

Phone: Church Office (03) 9578 1144
Pastor Jeff Meager (03) 9758 0950.

Applications close 30 September 1998.

Vineyard

Invites you to participate in

Why We Worship Conference 1-3 October 1998

Doing the Dream Conference 19-21 November 1998

Contact: Sans Souci Vineyard on (02) 9529 8811, <www.ssvcf.org.au>

Tops Staff

New camp manager commissioned for Stanwell Tops

Engadine, NSW, church was the host setting for a significant body of people on Friday 17 July. It was the formal commissioning of David Tolman, together with his wife Tammy and infant son Sam. David is the new Manager Ministry Team Leader for our Stanwell Tops Christian Conference Centre.

This site is one of the most attractive and versatile camp and Conference venues in our state.



Tammy and David Tolman, newly commissioned Manager of Stanwell Tops, NSW, campsite

David comes from a commercial background, formerly holding financial business management as an accountant.

His Christian life was fostered at our Wollongong, NSW, church and he now takes a key role in one of our newest affiliated churches, Southland.

Present for the occasion were site management staff, Ministry Team Leaders, Conference Executive, Stanwell Tops church and members of the Tolman home church, Southland Christian Community, family, and friends.

It was a relaxed supper occasion.

The formalities involved the laying on of hands by chosen co-labourers and our President Richard Menteith placing them before God in prayer in readiness for their new role. Welcome David.

Contact him on <stcc@ideal.net.au> or at PO Box 55, Helensburgh NSW 2508.

—Bruce Armstrong

Burmese Refugees

Refugees arrive with help of "Christian" readers



Demonstrators on Victoria's Parliament House steps mark the tenth anniversary of the Rangoon massacre

Eight Burmese refugees recently arrived in Melbourne with the help of readers of *The Australian Christian*. After talks with Burmese neighbours in Springvale and the UN and Australian Embassy in Bangkok last year, Ashley Barker of the Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope Mission was able to negotiate and then seek funds for Burmese refugees to arrive in Melbourne.

The airfares were raised by a number of Christians, including our readers. One of the refugees had her baby born one month after arrival. Another has her hus-

band still in the jungles on the Thai-Burmese border and seeks prayer for his safety. The husband is a part of Aung San Suu Kyi's cabinet (the Nobel Peace Prize winner and democratically-elected leader of Burma).

Pictured here is a group of refugees at a demonstration on Victoria's Parliament House steps to mark the tenth anniversary of the Rangoon massacre. Readers open to assist by participating in a medical biopsy program can help raise funds for fares. The hospital gives \$75 a time for a biopsy. For details contact (03) 9547 1129.

Making News

Booksellers' Choice

At the Christian Book of the Year Awards held 26 July, Michelle and Paul Andrews' children's book *Will Anyone Listen to Me?* was awarded "Booksellers Choice". The book was published by Vital Publications, the publishing arm of the Churches of Christ National Literature Department.

Independent Mega-Churches

In a recent listing of 59 US Independent Churches of Christ with memberships over 1000, Barry McMurtrie's church, with 3680 members, was placed fifth. Services currently exceed 4000 each Sunday. Barry previously served at Wollongong, NSW.

Bethel Funerals

The Caring Australian Alternative



A unique Christian funeral company supporting the work of missions

24-hour, 7-day service

Pre-arranged and pre-paid funerals

(03) 9877 9900 (all hours) fax (03) 9877 0544

107 Koonung Road, Blackburn Vic 3130

Remember Reservoir

Memorial service for recently closed church

Former members of the recently-closed Reservoir, Vic, church gathered at West Preston, Vic, church to mark the event. A large number of ex Reservoir members attended, including some who were foundation members. For example, Jack Welsford, in whose parents' home the church commenced. Pictured here is Pearl Alcorn who organised the event and sent out the invitations. Speakers included Doug Booth and Andrew Cordell of Vic-Tas Conference, former ministers and spouses Bruce and Pearl Alcorn, Keith and Frances Pitt, and Alan



and Nola Baker. Also present was Barry Jenkins, minister at nearby Thornbury, Vic, church.

Swan Hill Induction

Roger Risson inducted into ministry



Newly inducted minister, Roger Risson, with Board Chairperson Maren Chandler

Sunday 19 July was a special occasion at Swan Hill, Vic, when the church gathered for the induction of Roger Risson as minister.

John Gilmore (Vic-Tas Director of Ministry) led the induction, assisted by Board members in laying on of hands.

Others from the congregation presented Roger with various symbols of ministry, including a Bible, bread and wine.

Roger and his wife Anne come to Swan Hill following ministry at Noarlunga Centre Church of

Christ, SA. John Gilmore was also speaker for the occasion, choosing the subject "Upreach, Inreach and Outreach", offered a strong challenge to the congregation to work with each other and the minister in mutual ministry.

The church family looks forward to ministry with Anne and Roger which follows a short, but significant period spent with Margaret and Alan Fletcher. The church has appreciated the valued assistance given by John Gilmore in the area of ministerial negotiations.

This is our 7th Annual Spring Market and Fair



Free Fire Engine Rides Saturday 11 am - 1 pm

- quality arts & crafts _____
- face painting _____
- children's activities _____
- auction-friday night _____
- refreshments _____
- gourmet meals & snacks _____



Friday Night's Auction at 7.00 pm

Auction Items

- Sir Donald Bradman's 90th Year Limited Edition Print, signed & framed;
- Dinners for Two at local restaurants;
- Franklin Mint products;
- Night for 2 at Novotel, Glen Waverley
- Beautiful Arts and Crafts; & much more

please join us

friday october 9th

4 - 9pm and

saturday october 10th

10am - 4pm

Churches of Christ
Theological College

40-60 Jacksons Rd
Mulgrave Vic 3170

(Opposite AFL Park)

Ph: (03) 9790 1000

Mornington Church of Christ 10th Anniversary Service

10.00 am, Sunday 13 September 1998

Guest Speaker: Gerald Rose

Mornington Secondary College
Nepean Highway,
near corner of Bungower Rd,
Mornington, Vic.

Moyes Stays

Uniting Church Presbytery votes to let Gordon Moyes stay

The Sydney Presbytery of the Uniting Church has voted to renew the settlement of Wesley Mission Superintendent, Reverend Dr Gordon Moyes. The decision means Dr Moyes will continue as



the head of the largest parish of the Uniting Church.

Dr Moyes said he was "delighted" by the decision because the Mission had experienced twenty years of continuous growth under his leadership, with the past six months seeing the most vigorous growth in its 186-year history.

Expressing thanks to those who

had supported and prayed for him and his family over the past year, Dr Moyes said there was plenty of work still to be done.

"While I am grateful for the Presbytery's expression of confidence

in my ability to lead the Mission, there is so much need out there, we cannot afford to become complacent," Dr Moyes said.

"In fact, this issue was never not about my capacity or suitability, but was about power politics in the Church."

—Wesley Mission Communications.

Missionaries Set Free

Missionaries released unharmed after six months

Readers may recall our report concerning a young Swedish missionary couple Daniel and Paulina Brolin, both 22 years of age, who were abducted on 8 January in Dagestan, a new republic within the Russian Federation bordering on the Caspian Sea ("AC" 13.5.98). The couple were released on 23 June on the border of Chechnya and Dagestan.

During their imprisonment they were not allowed outside their 1.75 m by 4.5 m basement room. They described how they could only see a ray of light if they peeked through a small hole in the door. This enabled them to separate night from day and keep track of time. They followed a rou-

tine of exercises and memorised Bible verses.

Daniel described their first night on the dirt floor as being very cold. Food was given on a scheduled time and they cooked their meals on a camping stove. Their eventual release was undramatic, with no shooting, commotion or injuries.

A medical examination in Sweden shows they survived the ordeal remarkably well and were not ill once, although Paulina lost 10 kilos due to the poor quality of food. In reflecting on the experience, the couple said they learned a new Bible passage each day and were especially sustained by Isaiah 51:14 "The cowering prisoners will soon be set free; they will not die in the dungeon nor will they lack bread."

—Challenge Weekly, NZ

Sydney
Adelaide
Local
Country



• Free quotes • Packing
• Insurance • Storage

7 Swift Way,
Dandenong Vic 3175

Moving and Storage Pty Ltd.

Member of the VRTA

Twice weekly to Qld

(03) 9706 5616

New Zealand Tour — 1999 - 19 Days

Departing 5 March, Returning 23 March 1999

Travel with the Australian Christian Touring Party in association with Kirra Tours and enjoy a comprehensive coverage of both Islands of New Zealand, including the Bay of Islands, Auckland, Waitomo Caves, Rotorua's thermal area, Maori concert, Wellington, Marlborough Sounds, Franz and Fox Glaciers, Queenstown, Milford Sound, Mt Cook and Christchurch.

The world in a nutshell—South Pacific Paradise, high-class accommodation with private facilities, all dinners and breakfasts included.

From Sydney to Sydney — \$2,975.00 (Aust).

Price from other states available on application.

For complete details write to:

Mr R Bowen,
130 Johns Rd
WYONG NORTH NSW 2259
Phone (02) 4352 1738 (after 6.00 pm).

Lic No 60355

Resource Christian Music

Praise & Worship

- ★ Cassette/CD. Learn & enjoy the latest songs twice yearly.
- ★ Best of the best songs — for cong. worship.
- ★ Music supp. \$7.50
- ★ OHPT's © cleared or on disc (no fuss, make your own).
- ★ 600-song resource
- ★ Much more!

For brochure or
FREE SAMPLE PACK:

RCM, 4/2
Garden Blvde,
Dingley Vic
3172. Phone
(03) 9551 7476.



Here and There

Alexander Solzhenitsyn
A new biography of Alexander Solzhenitsyn by D.M. Thomas says "Solzhenitsyn helped to bring down the greatest tyranny the world has seen, besides educating the West as to its full horror". In his youth Solzhenitsyn was an enthusiastic communist and blind to the emerging horrors of the Soviet regime. In later years, Solzhenitsyn lost the "faith" and saved his conscience and became a major player in and teller of the drama of his era. He is famous for his book *The Gulag Archipelago*.

Christian Century

Prayer

What Happens When We Pray?

GEORGE WARREN

From an American survey of over 1,700 young people who answered the question, "Why do we pray?"; 32.8% said, "God listens to and answers your prayers". Another 27% replied that it helps you in times of stress and crisis and 18% said, "You feel relieved and better after prayer". When we pray, what happens? Does God really act upon the requests we bring to him? Or are the changes that happen more in our own psychology ... our attitudes, our emotions our awareness? These two questions span what we might call the theological and psychological dimensions of prayer.

So what happens when we pray? God's work happens.

That we often change when we pray is not to be doubted. Prayer will make us more aware of the one we pray for and of the issues we pray about. Sometimes, when we pray we are alerted to our own feelings and we begin to see attitudes within ourselves that need to change. Some years ago, a member of our church rubbed me up the wrong way. I think you would call it a "personality clash". It troubled me for he was a member of the church where I was the minister. I began to pray for him, that things would change. Change they did and this man and I became very good friends, enjoying our friendship in a weekly game of squash. How did this

change happen? I confess a large part of it was within me. My prayer made me more interested in him as a person, more able to see the best in him.

Paul Johnson in his book *The Psychology of Religion* gives a list of ten psychological effects of prayer. These range from being more aware of our own needs and self-deceptions, through enabling us to trust and relax, to renewing our emotional energy and enabling the integration of our personality.

So we change within when we pray. But if this is all that happens, then prayer is a very limited and self-centred activity.

Without the theological dimensions, prayer becomes narrow and humanist in its focus. Consider, that the reason we pray at all, is because God gives us hearts to desire it. The Spirit within stirs us to seek a communion with him. Then the results of that encounter bring us deeper into the will and the cause of God ... whatever that might be for us and our world. The changes we find happening in our own person are in fact the work of God causing us to grow to be his instruments. In Romans 8 Paul says, "In a similar way the Spirit also takes a share in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray, but the Spirit intercedes on our behalf with unutterable groanings". My new feelings about my friend came through the work of the Divine within me, changing me, and leading us both into the circumstances where human community was possible.

But more than this, sometimes when we pray, things out of the ordinary happen. Not always, but sometimes, illnesses are cured, accidents avoided,



circumstances are changed, not only for us but for others as well. All of these are beyond the realm of our own power to change. With the humility of faith all we can say is, "God is at work here!" But let us be clear that God is not at work just in response to our prayer, but in and through our prayer. Remember, it is God who moves us to pray in the first instance and as we respond, it is God working through the energy of our responsiveness.

So what happens when we pray? God's work happens, changing our psychology, giving us the will and empowering us to change our circumstances, and sometimes, miraculously changing the conditions we pray about. The whole process is the activity of God through the Spirit, in both psychological and theological dimensions.

George Warren is a member of the ministry team at Doncaster Community Church of Christ, with particular responsibility for pastoral care, small groups and spiritual formation. Married to Lesley, they have three adult children.

Conclusion

So here we are as Churches of Christ on the verge of the 21st century, setting out to change the world. But if we are to change the world, we must first be willing for the world to change us. I don't mean conforming to the world's values, I mean being willing to change our structures, methodology, attitudes and feelings, so that our mission and message are relevant to the needs and culture of the world in which we live. The world is already writing the church's agenda and it is an agenda of change.

For example, we must create a new language of communication that the world can understand. The words and imagery that the church has used for centuries to express the doctrines of God and Christ and sin and salvation are meaningless in our secular society.

What we would regard as the simple statement that "Christ died on the cross to save us from our sins" is incomprehensible to most people outside the church. Our efforts to explain it to them using the familiar cliches are even more incomprehensible.

If we are to communicate the eternal gospel, we have to find new words and images in terms of the culture and thought forms of the 21st century, just as the early church did in terms of the culture and thought forms of the first century. The people of God will need to learn the new words and images, feel them and be at home with them if we are to "gossip the gospel" in a world that has lost the way.

Opinions and viewpoints in issues of the Pamphlet Club are the authors', and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

*Published by the National Literature Department
of Churches of Christ in Australia
All correspondence to the Secretary
c/o PO Box 101
Essendon North Vic 3041
Supplement to "The Australian Christian"
9 September 1998.*

The Message and Mission of Churches of Christ in the New Century

Gordon Stirling



Pamphlet Club • 397

The second "Gordon Stirling Lecture" presented at the Prospect Church of Christ, SA, on Thursday 8 May 1997 by Gordon Stirling.

Our plea as a movement of Churches of Christ was to bring about Christian unity by restoring New Testament Christianity. We believed that a church united on the basis of New Testament Christianity would win the world.

Now as we move towards the 21st century as Churches of Christ, we must ask ourselves some important questions.

1. Was the plea a mistaken dream? If so, what is the point of our going on existing as a separate body of Christians ?
2. Has our plea been fulfilled? Has New Testament Christianity been restored to the modern church and is there the sort of unity that Christ himself prayed for?
3. Is our plea relevant to the contemporary church and world? Are contemporary people in and out of the church able to hear what we have been talking about for 200 years?
4. Was it God who was calling us back then to a particular mission to the church and the world, as expressed in what we called our plea? And, is God now calling us to rethink and to restate that plea in order for it to be relevant now?

There are of course two key words—restoration and unity.

Restoration

At the end of the 17th century American life was largely lived on the frontier. As people followed the frontier, the hard fight for existence or newly-found wealth left little time or inclination to follow any sort of faith. Most didn't. Those who did follow the various brands of Christianity fought bitterly from behind their denominational creeds. And it was all irrelevant to the life of the frontier.

So, many thinking people decided to set aside divisive creedal statements and traditions and to rediscover the essence of real Christianity in the New Testament, and for Christians to get together on that. In Britain there was a similar mood. Thinking Christians looked about them and saw the established churches out of touch with contemporary life and overloaded with the accumulated traditions of the ages. What they saw seemed a long way from what churches looked like in the New Testament writings. As the 19th century dawned, on both sides of the Atlantic there grew up a movement that saw the possibility of uniting all Christians in mission and evangelism by restoring the Christianity that they read about in the New Testa-

ment. The congregation is living right in the middle of human need. Loneliness in the crowd is a feature of modern life. In a world where everyone seems to want to talk, there are hurting people who long for someone to listen to them while they think aloud about what to do next. All of them, the frustrated, the burdened, the hopeless and the rapidly-growing underclass of the poor, need the feel of *koinonia*.

It goes deeper than mateship and is still there when the mates have gone home. It goes deeper than the fellowship of most church activities, in which we enjoy meeting other people and having a good time until next week. It means total unconditional accepting of people and total availability to people in and out of the church. It means being available at any time, at any cost. It means staying beside them even when they let us down again and again. It means caring for people as though they were Jesus himself.

Other Characteristics

There isn't space to consider other aspects of the life of the first church that are relevant to the 21st century. We would discover that it was a compassionate church, an evangelistic church "gossiping the gospel", a colour-blind church, a joyous church, a spirit-filled church, and a church united, but with great diversity. The scope is endless.

Unity

I am assuming that if we restore to our own churches the eternal values that made the church relevant in the first century, and will make it relevant in any century, we will be hastening the cause of Christian unity.

But let me make a few observations.

All denominations today are nearer to the life and spirit of the first church than they were 200 years ago.

There is more unity among modern Christians than the Campbells ever dreamed possible.

They say that we are in the "post-denominational age". Ideally, Churches of Christ have always been post-denominational.

While we have often behaved denominationally, we have thought of ourselves as not being a separate denomination, but rather as a movement within the whole church, with two objectives: commitment to work and witness for eternal New Testament values without compromise, and commitment to participate in every move that expresses the church's essential unity. It is important to be totally loyal to both commitments.

workability of his lifestyle, able to show our friends why this lifestyle makes sense. Not by preaching at them or sitting in judgment upon them, but in having caring dialogue with them.

An Evangelical Church

The New Testament world was a world where your religion was decided for you. Jews automatically belonged to God because they were Abraham's children. Greek and Roman children were offered to the gods of their families and had no choice in it. But the message of the Church was that each person made his or her own confession of faith in the living Christ as Lord and Saviour. That is the meaning of evangelicalism.

This is why we continue to preach and practise baptism as the immersion of penitent believers. Not because the rule book says so, but because it is the God-ordained way in which a believer affirms his or her faith in the living Lord who lived and died and rose again to give us life.

We do not go into the new century with the idea of making it easy for people to be counted as Christians and members of the body of Christ. A church of easy entry is a church of easy departure. Members of the first church lived and died for their confession of faith. It was public baptism that made them targets of persecution, but their church kept growing!

What do these people who have been made alive by the living Christ look like to the world? They are seen to be people who unconditionally accept everybody, while not necessarily condoning their views or lifestyles. They are seen to be compassionate, caring people going beyond the call of duty. They are seen to have a quality lifestyle, without self-righteousness and judgementalism. They are seen to be devoted to the cause of justice, especially to the poor, the deprived and the disadvantaged. They are seen to be people whose security in God sets them free to love and to lift and to laugh.

A True "Koinonia"

We have become used to the word *koinonia*, the New Testament Greek word for fellowship. Especially in its early weeks, the New Testament church was a true fellowship. Everybody took responsibility for everyone else's needs. Towards the end of the first century, *koinonia* in the church was strengthened in the face of increasing persecution.

The practice of *koinonia* is probably the greatest gift that we can bring to the church and the world, especially locally, where each

ment. Within 45 years that movement had been brought to Australia. In America they were called Disciples of Christ. In Britain and Australia they were known as Churches of Christ.

The major problem of this Restoration Movement was that its proponents thought of the New Testament as a book of rules and regulations. They used texts to support what they believed to be New Testament Christianity. But when changes such as the use of the organ in worship and the payment of ministers were proposed, they bent texts to find ways of either supporting or resisting the changes. Their understanding of New Testament Christianity divided the churches rather than uniting them.

They could not make up written agreements of belief and practice because they were strongly opposed to creeds. It is surprising that there was so much agreement among them about what New Testament Christianity was. This was because they followed what their highly-respected and authoritative leaders agreed to be New Testament Christianity. But with the passing of Alexander Campbell in the USA, of David King in Britain and of A.R. Main in Australia, the unwritten creed became blurred.

New issues arose, such as our relationship with other churches. We had to make up our minds on issues about which the New Testament gave no clear lead, such as the Christian attitude to war, to politics, to other social and moral issues. When change was mooted, some were for it and some against. We discovered that there was an abundance of texts, both pro and con, for every situation, most of them taken out of context.

Our predecessors were right in looking to the New Testament to discover what is essential Christianity. The mistake they made was in thinking that it was a rule book. The New Testament writers would have been horrified at the thought. They were writing urgent messages to churches in all sorts of contemporary situation on the frontiers of the Kingdom.

The New Testament consists of documents that tell the story of how a relatively small body of people, who were sold on Jesus Christ as their living Lord, expressed their own risen life and faith in terms of the contemporary cultures of their day. They were the church, and the New Testament documents do not suggest that they were perfect. They are "warts and all" documents. But they do tell the thrilling story of a church that, with all its faults and failings, literally turned the ancient world upside down. It is in that story that we can discover

what it was that made such a powerful impact on a world whose circumstances were uncannily like our own.

So when we talk about restoring New Testament Christianity in the 21st century we are thinking about discovering those things about the New Testament church and its mission and message that are relevant in every age applied to that particular age.

I want to suggest four of these to guide us as we set out to be a relevant body in the church and in the world of the new century.

A New Concept of God

At first the church's understanding of God was the old Hebrew understanding. But as the first century rolled on, the New Testament writings began to emphasise more and more that Jesus was the revelation of God. He was a living, walking picture of God.

In our modern world, people are looking for meaning, wondering if there is a God, and if so, where he is, what he is like and what on earth he is doing. In the New Testament we have the answer. God is in the world doing all of the things that Jesus did when he was here.

Jesus healed. God is working through medical researchers and healing teams, even if many of them don't know him or don't believe in him. If this is not so, why do we pray for the sick? Wherever leaders have a will really to serve their people, God is giving them insights into what to do—whether they are Christians or not. Else, why pray for the world and its leaders? That is the God people need to hear about, instead of the capricious, unreliable God above the bright blue sky who will do an occasional miracle for those who pester him enough.

At the heart of Jesus' revelation of God is the cross. The early church had to work out the meaning of the cross, so they used contemporary thought forms that belonged to the culture of their day. For the Jews the cross was the ultimate sacrifice to end all sacrifices. Roman Christians interpreted the cross in legal terms, using familiar legal words such as "redemption", the word used for freeing from bondage those incapable of freeing themselves.

We must do the same today. The appeal of the cross in today's world, where we are conscious as never before of the pain of the world, is that it shows us a picture of a God who is literally suffering with and for the people of the world. It says to people who are puzzled about the meaning of suffering, "God is not the author of pain. It is happening in spite of God, but God is in there with those who are suffering and bearing their pain and giving them what it takes to handle it victoriously, and, where he can, giving them healing for their hurts."

That is why in Churches of Christ we celebrate the Lord's Supper in all of our worship services. Not because the rule book says so, or else! We meet around the Table of the Lord every Sunday because at the heart of worship is the cross that reveals that our God is sufficient for the needs of our sort of world. It is not an habitual, dreary observance of a death, but an exciting celebration of a God who is dynamically active in our world.

A Church with a Gospel

After the first experiences of the presence of the risen Christ, the disciples thought of him as having gone away briefly, but that he would soon return in their lifetime. But, gradually, they realised that while he was gone as a physical presence, he was with them and in them as a living presence, closer than he had been to them when he was in the flesh. They found him a companion, a guide and a giver of power and life. Their writings began to be peppered with the phrase "in Christ" describing this close relationship with the living Christ.

In a world where so many suffer from low self-esteem, loss of self-worth, inhibitions, grief and meaninglessness, we can offer a living saviour who can set them free now from these and other soul-destroying experiences. For when we call him saviour, we are not only talking about what happens after the grave. Most moderns aren't interested in looking that far ahead. Today's painful experiences are too absorbing. What they want is a saviour for now.

We have asked young people the question, "Do you accept Jesus Christ as your saviour?" For many of them, "Yes" has meant that they agreed to a formula to get them to heaven when they die. But what they needed desperately, and often didn't get, was a saviour who could help them to untie their knotted relationships, to help them to work out their uncertain futures, or to see them through the torture of the discipline required to sort out their moral behaviour.

The resurrection also gives authority to Jesus Christ's lifestyle. This lifestyle is different from the world's way. Modern thinking has little room for such things as grace, forgiveness, unconditional acceptance, peace and justice, the second mile, turning the other cheek and refusal to sit in judgment on others. For modern people, all that seems too unreal and idealistic and impractical. But every other lifestyle fails. In every newspaper and on TV news there is daily evidence that the opposite to the way of Jesus doesn't work.

So as we go into the new century, we go as a people who practise the presence of the living Christ, demonstrating in our lives the

Prayer

Prayer in the Local Church

NEIL GILMORE

Nels Ferre writes that prayer is an easily accessible means to the greatest of power, yet we so rarely avail ourselves fully of this vital ministry. Prayer is a ministry—open to every person and to every local church—in which availability, rather than ability, counts. The sick, the strong, the shut-in, the activist, the aged, the young, all may share equally. When we get serious about prayer ministry a number of things will follow. The local church that gets serious about prayer ministry will realise that prayer ministry is not something tacked on to a Bible study session. Prayer ministry is people praying. People will need training in the art and practice of prayer. Prayer is not natural but supernatural.

How much time, thought and place does prayer hold in our lives and living?

There needs to be a place of prayer in the church buildings, such as the worship centre, open and supervised, or a special prayer room.

We will also realise that prayer ministry requires a "prayer minister". Someone who has no other responsibility in the church. This is a full-time job.

Then, people who get serious about prayer ministry will need to make some commitments.

Commitment of self. This is not something to be picked up and put down at will. Jesus told his disciples that they should always pray (Luke 18:1).

Surely, however, this is understandable. Did he not also say, "I will be with you always." (Matt 28:20)? These two

"always" need to be held together. Prayer ministry is a lifestyle in the company of the Lord.

Commitment of time. One thing is clear, we do not **have** time for prayer, we must **make** time for prayer. A specific time each day spent in close contact and communion with God. It may be but a matter of minutes, or it may be an hour or more. There are schemata available to show how to spend extended periods in prayer.

Commitment of place. We need to have a place. A place of comfort, relaxation and peace which encourages us to enter fully into God's presence. Maybe the church building or a spot in our home. Let's look at prayer in the local church in this way. When Jesus quotes the prophets, saying, "My Temple will be called a house of prayer" (Matt 21:13), he states a principle which has application at three levels. First, the nearest we have to a temple is our local church building. Can we say of our local church building, "This is a house of prayer"? How many person hours of prayer, actual praying, take place in that building each week. When we make the local church building a house of prayer it will do wonders for the atmosphere.

Second, Jesus says, "Go into all the world ..." (Matt 28:19). Now, the word which he uses can also bear the meaning "household". That is to say, "Go to every household". Of how many local church households can it be said, "This is a house of prayer"? Prayer ministry challenges all participants to make their household a house of prayer—a centre of prayer for family, neighbours, church, world, ever-widening circles of loving concern.

Third, Paul has a line (1 Cor 6:19) that our bodies are "temples of the Holy Spirit". He follows this picture through



to some rigorous conclusions. If we do similar with the "house of prayer" concept, we come to the nub of things. Can we say of our bodies that they are houses of prayer? How much time, thought and place does prayer hold in our lives and living?

Prayer may change things, but one sure thing is that prayer changes churches and prayer changes people, especially those who do the praying. I was part of some twenty people who got serious about the matter of prayer ministry. I saw that local church (Ainslie, ACT) change. I saw homes changed. I saw lives changed—my home, my life was among those changed.

If you, local church and people, are in the market for changed lives, changed homes, changed churches, get serious. Get serious about prayer ministry.

Neil Gilmore is living in retirement at Hamlyn Terrace, NSW. After a lifetime of ministry and worship in Churches of Christ, he finds himself part of an Anglican Church and teaches for the University of the Third Age in the area of Prayer.

Prayer

The Prayer of Silence

PATRICIA STITT

Some seven years ago I became part of a small group who met with a common purpose and open mind to sit quietly in the presence of Jesus. I had come to realise that for me prayer was more than talking. At first, it was with some hesitation. The group was always nourished by the Scripture "Be still and know that I am God" (Psa 46:10). There was a growing peace in this prayer of silence. A growing understanding too, of the place in the history of the Christian Church, of what I prefer to call contemplative prayer. We discovered for ourselves that deep prayer which the Desert Fathers had sought in the solitude of the desert places.

Richard Foster in his book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's true Home* quotes the Desert Father Ammonas, "I have shown you the power of silence and how fully pleasing it is to God. Know that it is by silence that the saints grew, that it was because of silence that the power of God dwelt in them, because of silence that the mysteries of God were known to them."

In our walk we came to discover the wordiness of our lives. Words which often concealed the emptiness within. We discovered that contemplative prayer was the one discipline that could free us from our addiction to words. "In God alone my soul waits in silence." (Psa 62:1) So gradually our group formed itself, made commitments in terms and time

of place, and became a community of prayer within the life of our church.

This community has learnt the way of Christian meditation. We faithfully and individually practise the daily discipline of contemplative prayer. We learnt that sitting still is not easy, nor necessarily restful. Our silence is a loving inner attentiveness to God, or, as the word contemplate implies, a gazing upon God. "You will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart." (Jer 29:13)

We have learned over time from Jesus' models of prayer, the Scriptures and Christian tradition. We have been enriched by the experience of others, particularly from contemporary writers such as John Main, Thomas Merton, Richard Foster, Eugene Peterson and Henri Nouwen. Nouwen, for example, comments that contemplative prayer allows us to find a stillness where we can open our hands to find God's promises.

We have been strengthened in this journey by our daily meditation practice and sharing weekly with our community. We have shared in quiet days, in walks, in guided retreats and some have journeyed further by the experience of a week-long silent retreat. These have been in local churches, bush settings and retreat centres.

What does this mean for the individual? For the church?

Essentially, contemplation is a discipline of heart and

mind in the Spirit of Christ. It offers renewal to the believer by expanding and deepening our life of prayer and encouraging the "listening" aspect of our lives.

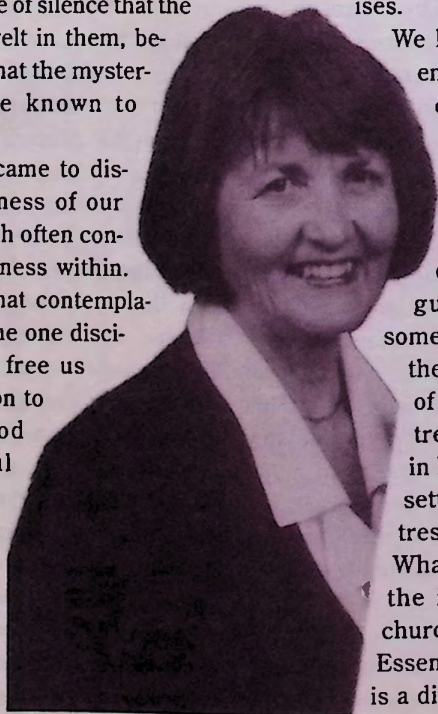
People in the community are seeking spirituality and finding a Pandora's Box of answers beyond the doors of the church. Our meditation classes are one way to bridge this gap between the church and society. Recently four adults came "off the street" to learn meditation. They are now asking the "God questions".

Others have come, sometimes because they were stressed, shared in the weekly, then daily, practice of medita-

We learnt that sitting still is not easy, nor necessarily restful.

tion, entered the worshipping life of our church and have been baptised. We have responded to the need of families by offering a small group experience and teaching of meditation to young mums. Further, the contemplative nature in children has been encouraged by the practice of stillness, for increasing periods of time, in an attitude of prayer.

Within the demands of busy schedules, the daily practice of inner silence and solitude opens us to the indwelling Christ. As Evelyn Underhill notes, contemplation of Christ in this way is not a pious day dreaming. Rather, it is a deliberate and humble paying of attention to Christ and his mysteries. Maranatha! Patricia Stitt is a Board member at Dianella, WA and is involved in all aspects of church life and ministry, particularly to children and families. She is currently training in spiritual direction.



Prayer

Unanswered Prayer

RUTH MAY

I believe prayer is an opportunity to be connected to God in a very real and personal manner, like an intimate relationship between parent and child, husband and wife, sweethearts, close friends. A close relationship where feelings can be shared, where we don't talk the other person down, where communication is present, where we can allow ourselves to be vulnerable, open and honest with each other.

Luke records a pattern Jesus left us as a guide for our prayers: "Your kingdom come ...", seeking for the real and experienced presence of God in our lives

God answered in ways I found almost too hard to understand.

through Jesus, the unique bearer of God's Spirit, in order to bring to our lives a sense of peace, healing and renewal.

Prayer is a vital experience. Jesus often prayed. He prayed when he was anxious, when about to journey with the disciples and before he died. He had a close relationship with his heavenly Father. For Jesus, prayer was an experience with God, and yet the answer in the garden on that lonely and dark Gethsemane night was a painful answer!

It is easy to regard prayer as a wish list, a time to twist God's arm and nag about our needs. We are told to ask, seek and knock and God will respond to our prayers. Now I have experienced God at work in my life in wonderful ways through prayer, however, there have been hard and frightening times too, when God seemed not to hear my cry. "Give us today our bread for the day"

is a request for God to go on supplying my physical needs day by day. Sometimes I have desperately prayed for my needs, and yet God answered in ways I found almost too hard to understand. When I could not seem to experience the answers to my prayers which I felt were vital for my own well-being or for my family, I had to search out the meaning of "Do not bring us to a time of trial". I discovered that the prayer is saying to me "God, don't make it too hard for me because I may not be able to cope!"

Very slowly, I began to understand that God is always with me and that I will never be asked to cope with a situation which is too hard for me.

Matthew reiterates God's promise, "I am with you always". Even as we pray we experience Jesus being with us in every phase and step of our existence to guide us, to love us, to give us hope and to encourage us. So we never need to be frightened of not coping with our life situations!

Luke 11:9-13 reminds us that even as you and I, imperfect and self-centred as we are, know how to give good gifts to our children, our amazing God is so much more able to give good gifts to God's children.

We need to be consistent in our prayers and to recognise that God always responds graciously to the genuine needs of God's people. Prayer is acknowledging our own vulnerability, sharing our

It is easy to regard prayer as a wish list, a time to twist God's arm and nag about our needs.



needs and our concerns both for ourselves and those we know and care about.

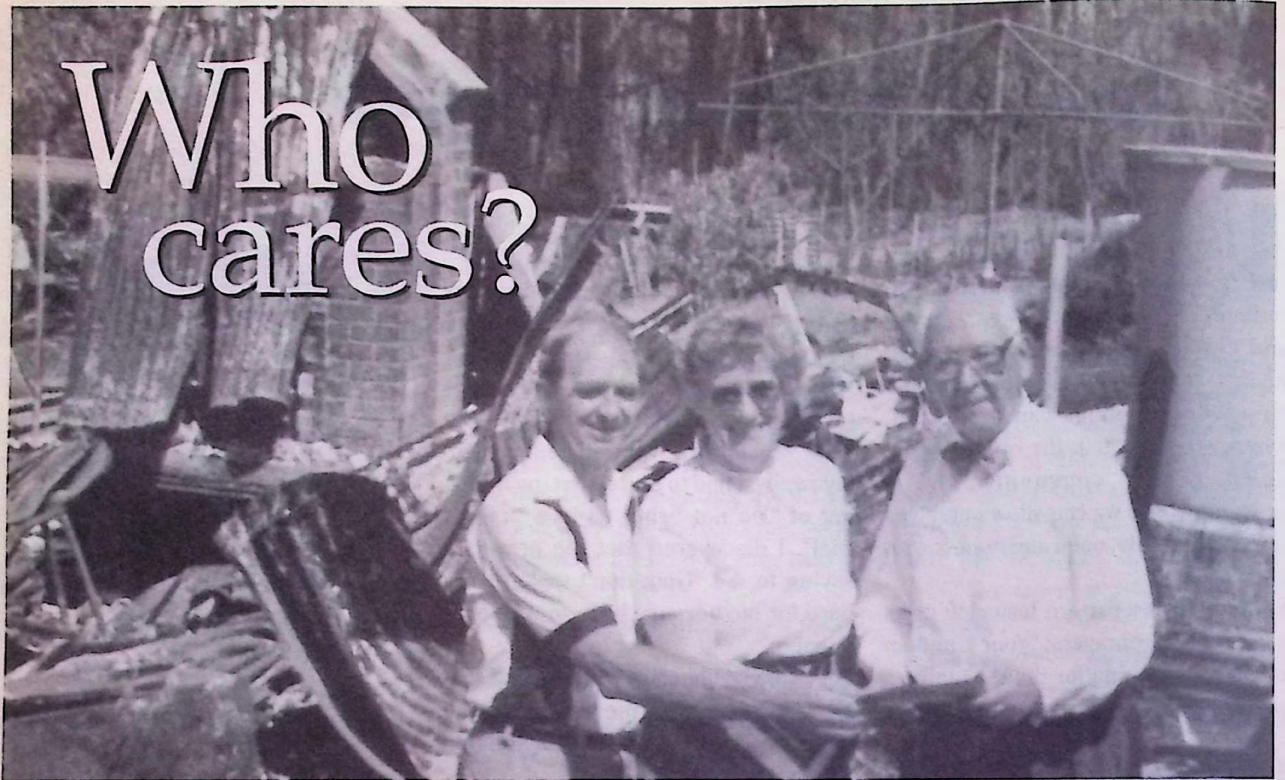
The answers to our prayers will not always be the answers we want, but our God parent will never give bad gifts to the children. We, the followers or disciples of Jesus, need to trust that God always listens and responds to the cries of the people with wisdom and compassion.

We must also believe and be open to the possibility that God might give Godself to us in a radical and unexpected manner, which will sustain us and send us out to venture and grow in different ways. Ways which will allow us to become the people God intends each of us to be

When we experience times in our lives where God does not seem to be answering our prayers, when our lives appear to be falling apart, perhaps these are the very times when we have to step out and trust God and allow God to work new miracles in our lives, to remake our painful disappointments into new opportunities.

Ruth May is minister of the Prospect, SA church.

Who cares?



Answer: **ANSVAR** Home & Contents Insurance

What's left? How are we going to cope with the inconvenience? Why did it happen to us? How will we replace it all? Who can we turn to?

Answer? Ansvar House and Contents Insurance.

Why? Because Ansvar cares enough to help you put it right. When you're insured with Ansvar, you can rest easy, knowing that our first priority since 1961 has been our commitment to our policy holders.

That means

- prompt claims service
- true 'new for old' replacement
- low premiums
- plain English contracts and
- discounts for people 55 and over

More important, we care first about people, not profits. In fact, surplus profits will be used to fund programs which educate teenagers about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.

So if you care to save, while protecting your future and the future of young Australians, call Ansvar today. Because we care, too.

Ansvar also offers a wide range of policies for boats, businesses, churches and cars.

ANSVAR

Insurance you can believe in.

Ansvar Australia Insurance Limited
A.C.N. 007 216 506

VICTORIA (03) 9650 9711

20 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000

NEW SOUTH WALES (02) 9683 4166

419 Church Street, Nth Parramatta 2151

SOUTH AUSTRALIA (08) 8338 1900

202 Glen Osmond Road, Fullarton 5063

WESTERN AUSTRALIA (08) 9321 6291

8 Clive Street, West Perth 6005

QUEENSLAND (07) 3221 8449

157 Ann Street, Brisbane 4000

TASMANIA 1800 657 761

P.O. Box 330, Launceston 7250

EMAIL: insure@ansvar.com.au

970525

Prayer

Prayer Vigils

CRAIG TOWNSEND

Twenty-seven thousand Christians from Cairns to Hobart, from Albury to Perth took costly journeys to "March for Jesus" in Canberra 30 May. It was the tenth anniversary of the first Canberra Gathering which launched the Aussie Awakening movement.

Across the country each Good Friday the tradition has built. Christians gather outside at all-night vigils, presenting the heartfelt written prayers of a generation.

He energised me. It was 4.00 am before I knew it.

Are prayer vigils like this just half-time mini-league in the main game—perhaps at 11.00 on a Sunday morning? Or is the market place Jesus perhaps surprising us again?

The vigils are part of a broader strategy to take the church and its message into the community, particularly through family festivals. Last year 10,000 Christians led their peers into face-to-face mission with over a million Aussies.

Jenny went to Canberra and tells her own story:

"It cost to go. I had a real struggle once I was there whether I would actually stay up and participate actively in it. God put a thing in my mind about Gethsemane, 'Would you not stay with me one hour?'"

"So I decided that God was saying to me not to give in to my flesh and the doubt that God would be using this prayer vigil for good. He energised me. It was 4.00 am before I knew it.

"When I see Parliament House now on

TV I remember being there and my prayers sort of live again. I feel connected to our capital and what is happening there.

"People said, 'Why go Canberra to pray? Why put on a show?' I can pray here in Adelaide in my room but the reality of being there with people from all over the country, knowing that others had paid the same price, meant a lot.

"People can pray any time. It wasn't just any prayer meeting. The act of going and what it cost to go sort of became part of the prayer itself—an offering back to God that undergirded what we were doing—a bit like fasting.

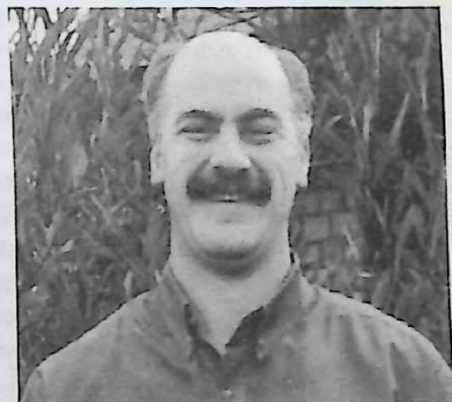
"Experiencing the march, the sense of unity, the humility, really wanting God to move—it gave me a broader, fuller perspective of where our country is, where the church is at, and, to my surprise, where I'm at too.

"The big abstract stuff suddenly became more tangible, more personal—the politicians were not somewhere over there, but right there where we were.

"I almost feel as if we have left the scent of God on the Parliamentary turf.

"On the whole people's behalf we prayed what we knew many of them couldn't pray or wouldn't think to pray. There was something about being there, unified with the one purpose. Sometimes you can go to a prayer meeting and you can feel like you have to be there because if you don't go people will be disappointed.

"Looking up at the vastness of the night sky was different. Sometimes inside you can feel like your prayers are bouncing off walls. It was -2°. Humanly, you would say, 'What a ridiculous group sitting there freezing.' But it didn't seem like that. We were saying to God



we need you. The cold didn't stop me—God lifted our vision above that—it almost became fun.

"Holiness was a theme—for God's people to reflect Him. Encouraging politicians and not just griping. We prayed for a lady whose sister was a prostitute and one with a disturbing family situation. We felt the lostness of so many people."

I asked Jenny what she had brought back from the National Gathering.

"Grass roots things are of lasting significance. I feel more disturbed that the inside of our churches are not always relevant to today's community. What would make some people from the outside want to come in? Maybe the church is not just inside.

"The established church can appear tarnished. I'm thinking its got to be people that make the changes, connecting people with people. If we're really allowing his nature to reflect being peace makers and stuff like that, why wouldn't people want to be near us?"

"I want to be in places at home where it happens too. Not just taking from church, consumerism, more of a stirring to pass on the good things to others."

Craig Townsend is a member of Noarlunga Church of Christ, SA, and SA Coordinator of Awakening 2000.

How I See My World

PHILIP HUNT

My world extends from Moscow to Gaza. If I say it is diverse, it's a bit like saying that Queensland is warm. As I write this, I am holidaying on the Sunshine Coast. Eastern Europe and the Middle East seem far away. Yet a few days ago huge bombs killed hundreds of people. Not in the region I serve, but in Africa. A fundamentalist Islamic group with roots in the Middle East claimed responsibility.

I am sympathetic to people who see the problems of the post-Communist and Middle East world as religious, or ethnic. I used to see it that way myself. The trouble is that we have not been well served by the way the issues are reported. The truth is complex. It does not lend itself well to sound bites and TV pictures.

The truth is that the lack of peace and harmony in our world has very little to do with religion or culture. These are mere vehicles for something else. And that "something else" is misguided or evil leadership. Bad leaders cause most of the problems we are trying to deal with. How do people get to be leaders in our world? Usually by manipulation, exploitation and dominance. The acquisition of

power and the preservation of it are the key drivers for most leaders in the world. In Australia too! Friends in politics admit to me that the bottom-line issue in any election is winning. Not the economy, unemployment, taxes or overseas aid. In some countries, leaders have complete control of the mass media. Thus they have powerful tools to lie to their people, distorting their understanding of the world and creating a fiction of religious or ethnic fear

The truth is that the lack of peace and harmony in our world has very little to do with religion or culture.

that keeps them in power. We are seeing the seeds of such techniques at work in Australia today. And the fruits of such techniques in Kosovo.

There is a direct connection and a slippery slope between the racist rhetoric of ignorance in Australia today and ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia. I am

dismayed that so few people seem to see it. Such is the power of the easy life in Australia. Those who fail to study history and world affairs, may be forced to repeat it!

So what is required? I experienced the answer in Australia during this visit. The reason for our visit, apart from the need for a holiday, was the marriage of our daughter, Melanie. She married David Carbon. It was a modern Australian event. The true Australia, not the fiction promoted by the mono-culturalists. Two families with long historical traditions that stretched back to distant lands were united in love. Our family has Protestant English-Scottish roots. (What some people might wrongly call "Australian".) The Carbon tradition is Catholic European, dominantly Maltese. The wedding reception was a true celebration. An affirmation of unity in diversity.

Multi-cultural inclusiveness is a hallmark of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We see it in the people he chose to be close to him, and in the way he served people.

Australia has always been a multi-cultural society. Aboriginal Australia was and is multi-cultural. Chinese and European came more than a hundred



years ago. The world continues to come Down Under. Only the neurotically immature could think everyone in Australia has to conform to a single culture.

Celebrations like David and Melanie's wedding have much to teach us about how to deal with the problems of the world. Only when we reject the politics of fear, and embrace (literally) the Good News of inclusive love can the world begin to be a place over which God smiles more than he weeps.

Philip Hunt was previously the Chief Executive Officer of World Vision, Australia and a member of the Doncaster, Vic, church. He moved to his new position as Vice President, World Vision International, Middle East & Eastern Europe Region in Vienna in October, 1996.

Strack Removals

Removals—Storage—
Packing—Pianos
All Suburbs—Country—
Interstate

David Strack
(Proprietor)

Office and Store
45 McIntosh Street
Airport West 3042

Telephone (03) 9330 2211
Fax (03) 9330 3039
AH (054) 27 0472

"Service since 1907"

L. C. F. Higgins

7 The Parade
Norwood SA 5067
Phone (08) 8362 1665
e-mail <lh@camtech.net.au>

- Accountancy Services
- Business Management
- Retirement Planning
- Taxation Returns



Chartered Accountant



SWANSTON STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST Melbourne (cnr Swanston & Little Lonsdale Streets)

Sunday

9.00 a.m. & 11.00 a.m.

7.00 p.m.

Worship & Communion
Services
Gospel Celebration

Wednesday

1.15-1.45 p.m.

Lunchtime Service

For further enquiries, please ring (03) 9663 3884

Now Let Us Appraise Famous People

VINEY LONGTHORP

Many people argue, and I think rightly, that there is no better way of approaching history than through the lives of the many people who have helped shape it. And this conviction must be really widespread, because I have noticed in the past few years how many of our daily newspapers record significant anniversaries of famous people.

This confirms the conviction of many of us that ideas people are the key to both the future and the past.

Furthermore, the obituaries of many important ones are well-written, with a depth of insight regarding such people's significance.

In this respect, history, it seems, has caught on, even if it appears to be languishing as an academic discipline in many of our colleges and universities.

Those who enjoy reading about the famous and the significant in the long march of history will enjoy the new and updated edition of Michael Hart's book, *The Hundred—A ranking of the most influential persons in history*. There has been a consistent demand for this book, which will encourage all history buffs. Our author casts a long net, from Menes, the original king of the first Egyptian dynasty (3100 BC) right through to Michael Gorbachev. But the aim of the book is not simply to give scholarly vignettes of the 100 most important persons, but further, to rank them according to their influence in the ways their lives swayed the destinies of human beings the most, determining the rise and fall of civilisations and transforming the course of history at any point.

Naturally, such ranking will engage readers in fascinating debates as reasons are given for this ordering. As you can imagine, the book is a mine of information. It is one of that rare species of serious writing which is fun to read.

To begin, that great triumvirate of thinkers whom it is often claimed have shaped the outlook and world-view of the twentieth century are included: Sigmund Freud (69), Karl Marx (27), and Charles Darwin (16). It is interesting that Mr Hart lists so many people, who, like these three, worked primarily at the level of ideas, theories and philosophies. And there are many more of the same: Albert Einstein (10), Aristotle (13),

Galileo Galilei (12), and Rene Descartes (49). This confirms the conviction of many of us that ideas people are the key to both the future and the past.

Even so, the "doers" of the world are given guernseys; most would agree with Hart's handout: James Watt (22), Gutenberg (8), Marconi (38), and George Washington (26). And yes, girls, women are under-represented. Marie Curie is listed in the un-ranked supplementary group, but at 94, Queen Elizabeth I of England and Queen Isabella of Spain (65) stand out from an almost all-male cast. Nor are there any Australians on the list. Though Christopher Columbus (9) is highly ranked, and for obvious reasons, not all want to pay him homage. I have read of recent accounts of some communities in both Americas who have burned effigies of him, wishing he had stayed at home.

The treatment of Shakespeare (31), for some, will be controversial. Hart subscribes to the view that those magnificent plays and sonnets were really the work of one Edward De Vere. His arguments are very persuasive. But for me, I'm sticking to the more romantic belief that genius can spring almost spontaneously—and in defiance of cold logic, from apparently unpromising environments: after all, "The play's the thing".

And in the top places? Muhammad is number one; number two is Isaac Newton, while Jesus Christ is ranked third. The Apostle Paul (6) and Moses (15) are the only other characters from the Bible.

In placing Jesus third, Hart is not trying to engage in a reli-



gious controversy or in radical scepticism.

He explains his decisions where to rank very carefully, which is consistent with his overall criteria. He explains that there is no doubt that Christianity has had more adherents over the course of time. But he says that he is not dealing with the significance of the religions themselves, but the influence of particular people. Christianity, he argues, unlike Islam, was founded by two people, Jesus and Paul, and the credit must, therefore, be apportioned between them.

He does concede, however, that even though we may not know what form Christianity may have taken without Paul's influence, it is clear that without Jesus it would not exist at all. Thus speaks a reasonable man of the world about religion in a way in which a reasonable man of the world only can speak. To those who have known the saving grace of God in Christ, lists and ranking are simply irrelevant. All in all, this is an impressive book which can be used as a reference or read for sheer enjoyment, from go to whoa.

Michael Hart *The 100—A ranking of the most influential persons in history* Simon and Shuster. RRP \$24.95.

GREENWAYS
RETIREMENT VILLAGE

330-350 Frankston-Dandenong Road
Seaford Vic 3198
Phone (03) 9786 8679

Managed by
Church of Christ
Frankston

1- and 2-bedroom villas
Motel-type lodge suites

Waiting list open

Classifieds

BIRTHS

HARWOOD, Daria Ann 7 lb 4 oz, 21 inches long, honey blonde and blue eyes, arrived safely on 30 July. Darren and Elicia praise and thank God for their lovely daughter born in Fairfield Hospital, NSW.

JONES (GARRETT) To Trevor (Box Hill, Vic) and Sally (formerly Thornleigh, NSW) a daughter, Rebekah Elise, 7 lb 1 oz, on Monday 10 August 1998. A new grand daughter to June and Frank, and Jan and David. "Another perfect gift from God."

DIAMOND WEDDING

GORDON, Jeff and Dora Judith, Cynthia and Donald praise God for this special celebration of their parents on 20 September 1998. Family and friends will share together in their home at 12 McKenzie Place, Forest Lake Queensland 4078. The wedding service was conducted by Jeff's father, James Gordon, with the support of Allen Brooke and Bob Hilford, in the North Perth Church of Christ, Western Australia.

DEATHS

HOLLOWAY, Roger David Douglas and Ivy, Beth and Peter, and their families, Carole (Roger's widow)

and children, Kristy, Daniel and Tahlea, thank so many for their love, prayers and concern following his tragic death in a fall from a train, early March. He is so sadly missed.

PARK, Lewis Henry On 29.6.98, aged 93 years. Beloved husband of Grace (dec) nee Ewers. Loved father of Margaret, Roberta, Frances, Dorothy and Georgina. Good and faithful servant.

HOLIDAYS

GRAMPIANS SUNRISE HOLIDAY UNITS Modern FSC, 6 2-BR units, 1 3-BR cottage, games room. Superb views, farm setting with hand-fed animals. Suit family holidays, reunions, small group camps or retreats. Speak to Bruce or Marilyn Bertram (03) 5356 6300.

HOUSEBOAT "White Heron" 8-berth. Moored at Blanchetown, SA. Phone (08) 8365 1153 or (08) 8540 5250 or write 7 Gameau Rd, Paradise 5075.

SUNSHINE COAST, CALOUNDRA, QUEENSLAND Two bedroom holiday unit for rent. Ground floor, lockup garage, pool, short walk to shops and beaches. Phone Trevor or Gayle on (08) 8298 7733.

Thinking Biblically Reading the Fine Print

WAYNE BETTS

If you ever want to make the eyes of a class glaze over, try working through (as I have recently) the laws and regulations in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. At one level, it all seems so finicky, so petty, so far removed from the important concerns of life. Not the ten commandments, of course, they're very important—it's all the other "fine print" that follows them! When you look at that "fine print" closely, though, there's a



When you look at that "fine print" closely, though, there's a lot there that makes tremendous sense.

lot there that makes tremendous sense. The concern for ordered household life, with an emphasis on honouring parents (Lev 19:3), coupled with a heart for the disadvantaged—the poor, widows and orphans (Lev 19:9-10)—even care for animals (Deut 25:4)—shows the compassionate face of this covenant legislation.

The administration of justice (Deut 17:2-7) is another major consideration, as is the Law's apparent fixation with deviant sexual practices. (It's no wonder there aren't many memory verses drawn from these regulations—some chapters need a MA 15+ rating.) (And yes, I have deliberately left out these references—you'll have to look your-

elves!) All this is testimony to humankind's amazing inventiveness when it comes to sinning! Perhaps the regulations most removed from our contemporary society are those regarding impurity. It's important to realise that ritual impurity was not necessarily a sign of sin—most people would have been ceremonially unclean on a regular basis, through the various cycles and events of adult life. This concern for purity, I think, is due to the "tabernacling" of God among his people. Old Testament narratives are often punctuated by the explosive interaction of holy God and unholy humans. The purity laws provide criteria by which people could judge their suitability for encountering the Holy One of Israel.

The seeming pettiness of some of the regulations, rather than an annoyance, could be received as God's interest and involvement with every area of Israelite life—from great religious festivals (Lev 23), to accurate weights (Lev 19:35-37). Even the injunction to bind the law to hands and forehead (Deut 11:18) is a reminder of God's all-pervasive presence. So, looking back, if my class seemed a little glazed, perhaps it was more the fault of the teacher than the subject-matter!

For all your car requirements see Ken Geyer

Ken Geyer

LMCT 6549

SELECT USED CARS

For stock details and information, visit our web site:
www.internetmedia.com.au/geycercars

Ringwood Auto Gas

Accredited LP gas conversions
Ring for an obligation-free quotation

Ken Geyer Automotive

for reliable service or repairs on your vehicle

Phone (03) 9879 4004

47 Bond Street, Ringwood 3134

Obituaries Church News

OBITUARIES BAPTISMS

OBITUARIES ARE LIMITED TO 100 WORDS BURNS, Laurie

Laurie was born in Carlton, Vic, in 1922. He was the fourth of five children and worked at Prestige Clothing, before serving in the army during WW2 in New Guinea. He married Betty in 1946 and they had two children, Laurence and Betty. Laurie had good general knowledge and loved listening to music. He was always cheerful and had a sense of humour. Laurie has been part of the church family at Strathmore and (since 1996) at North Essendon. He died suddenly of heart-related causes. Missed by all his friends at North Essendon. —ME

DICKSON, Ivy Ethel

(25.7.98) Ivy was born to Walter and Mary Brown 7.5.04 at Brunswick, Vic. Married Harry Dickson 7.5.27 at Moreland. Harry died 1990. Active in Moreland for 62 years and later Ivanhoe and Tootgarook churches. Involved in women's work. Appointed Victorian CWF President in 1966. For the past nine years a resident at Betheden. Ivy will always be remembered for her gift of hospitality, concern for family, and her love for her Lord and church. She leaves two sons, Ray and Fred, their wives Joyce and Alison, seven grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren. —Tom Frazer

EAGLES, Norman Stanley

(10.8.98) Norm Eagles was born in 1901. He married Selina Baker 73 years ago and they had seven sons and two daughters. As a family Selina, Norm and the children were faithful attenders at the Haven, Vic, church. Norm loved many sports, including bowls, fishing, cricket and football. He grew vegetables for a pastime and supplied them free of charge to anyone who called. Pop is lovingly remembered for his great fondness for all the family; 39 grandchildren, 122 great-grandchildren and 49 great-great grandchildren. His funeral was held at the Horsham Church of Christ.

—Julie Trinnick

•Myra Smith, Bayswater, Vic •Chris Spratt, Croydon, Vic •Shing, Loi and Ten Nuynh, Fairfield, NSW •Wayne and Trish Rieck, Christy Roache, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld •Amanda Tanner, Alexandria Toovey, Jarrod Pilton, Kerryn McFadzean, Tracey Reagan, Jenny Coton, Warwick, WA •Adam Moller, Tim Andrews, Nailsworth, SA

MARRIAGES

•Tamara Brunotte and Paul Bauer, Kaniva, Vic •Natalie Beckingham and Bill Roberts, Warwick, WA

DEATHS

•Fred Winter, Ephraim Davis, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld •Dorrie Shreeve, Phyllis Moyle, Warwick, WA •Murray Purdie, E. Oxenberry, Nailsworth, SA

NSW

FAIRFIELD (Darren Harwood) Church gives thanks for Daria's birth & the addition of Shing's family to the church from Hong Kong ... Darren's Gospel message at the combined service in Fairfield was joyful ... William's (Korean) presence is practical, together with the Spanish church

SA

BROOKLYN PARK (John Main) Church looking into Carpark Charisma Group, investigating innovative ways of enabling community to have positive view of our church ... Hosting workshop: Care and Outreach for Seniors, guest leader Pam Clapshaw ... Prayer chain set up among members ... Small groups recommenced after short recess ... Followers Group, meeting Sunday evenings—light meal, praise, prayer and learning. ... Attendances at Shout for Joy services averaging over 80 fortnightly.

NAILSWORTH (Andrew Evans) New appointments—Nell Oxenberry, elder,

Craig Lockwood, Damien Carson, deacons, Jeanette Maddox, Joan Oxenberry, deaconesses at AGM ... Deaconesses holding luncheons for senior members ... David Brooker, State Minister, speaker at anniversary ... Ken Harris (Melbourne) conducted youth seminar highlighting "Relationships" plus session for parents ... Four sermons on "Prophecy" by Graeme Harrison of "Friends of Israel" ... AGM reported increases in membership, attendances & finances.

QLD

HUME ST, TOOWOOMBA (Dale White, Ross Savill) 300 attended Sunday night service with Steve Grace ... MOPS ministry now involving 76 mums & more than 100 children in once-a-month program ... Church hosted State MOPS conference, 54 people registering from Qld & NSW ... Newly-expanded book room turning over \$5000 per month ... Open Day 15 August attracted hundreds from community to activities, food stalls & displays. Christian radio station conducted live broadcast from church during the day.

VIC

BLACKBURN (David Ratten, John Rowe, Russell Croxford, Anne Spoelder) John Bond, South Perth, speaker 8 August, great messages & music enjoyed by all ... Youth group did house cleaning work & raised \$350 for homeless youth... \$5235 given for World Vision 40 Hour Famine, largest amount in state ... \$1,500 from "Christmas in July" night for Rwanda & \$1245 for New Guinea relief ... New MOPS group progressing well.

BAYSWATER (Peter Clayton) Ladies morning & coffee evenings enjoyed ... Teen Bible studies commenced during morning services ... Recent speakers from Drug Arm, Bible Society, Scripture Union & Jack Edwards from Overseas Mission ... Foods of the world luncheon held ... Successful drug &

alcohol abuse seminar held ... Travel club recently visited Geelong ... 17 participated in youth camp at Running Creek ... Interesting programs for "TAG" group.

KANIVA (Paul Bauer) Several members attended Paul's marriage to Tamara Brunotte of Boronia ... Jan Peddersen of Bible Society addressed combined congregation & PSA on Bible Sunday ... Donation made to Port Hedland church & PNG disaster relief fund ... Discussions continuing re shared ministry with Uniting Church ... Well-attended community service & barbecue lunch at Consolidated School.

YARRAWONGA (Ron Goodwin) Ron began ministry in March, he is active & encouraging & initiated an extra Bible study in a home ... Church hall upgraded & carpeted, church floor treated ... Weekly craft mornings proving popular, making gifts for hospital visitation or for sale, also learning new crafts ... Many away for winter ... Church in good heart.

PYRAMID HILL (Bill Sharrock) Successful ten pin bowling night held in Bendigo for Boort and Pyramid Hill youth ... Prayer for recovery for Kevin O'Hara & Pat Ahearn ... New Tribes Mission spoke recently ... Baptismal service on 6.9.98 for Kathleen Parry ... Planning under way for combined churches evening service 11.10.98.

WA

WARWICK (Jim Longbottom, Keith Bowes, Graham Hill, Paul Sanders, Jodie Mullahey) 25th anniversary celebrated 7 June ... Warwick 3rd in State Youth Games at Bunbury ... Twin boys born to Trish & Paul Hitchins, brothers for Amelia .. "The Great Aussie Adventure Kids Holiday Club" great success, over 125 different children attended ... Planning under way for weekly Kids Club after school ... "Focus on Faith", 8-9 August, theme "Keeping Faith in the Pain". Geoff Westlake spoke on 3 occasions ... Barbara Cox at women's luncheon.

Exploring the Day As Winter Departs ...

JANET THOMPSON

Lord of the changing seasons,
We thank you for the endings that are part of
winter, and the beginnings that come with the
spring.

We praise you for the awareness of change and
growth that the progress of a year brings into
our lives;

When winter comes around, we thank you for
the times of quiet withdrawal—when the trees
lose their leaves, the birds migrate and the days
grow short and cold,

reminding us of lives that draw to a close,
friendships that alter and fade,
tasks that are completed, and some that must
be left unfinished.

Thank you for giving us days of retreat and re-
flection, and opportunities to grieve—
for people we have loved, and for situations
that have changed.

We pray for your presence with those who are
mourning,
with those who are trapped by despair,
and with those who feel they have nowhere
to go.

May they feel you close—understanding and ac-
cepting their bewilderment and disorientation.
As the cold weather melts away in the lightness
of spring days, we thank you for the promise of
new life—

for blossoms, new leaves, and longer eve-
nings,

for mild breezes, open windows, and the
voices of children at play.

We are confronted with your faithfulness
in the green of the grass,
the countless shades of the flowers,



and the fragrances that drift through our gar-
dens.

... and we pray that those who are afflicted with
hay fever will still be able to find joy in all these
colours of your creation!

Father, we acknowledge that life comes to us
with highs and lows, in shades of grey, and in
the total range of rainbow hues, and we celebrate
the fact that you are with us, whatever colour
the days bring with them.

We rejoice in the constancy of your caring,
and the ongoing revelation of your promise that
you will never leave us, or let us down.

May we move on from the time of retreat and
grieving,

may our minds and spirits be lifted up,
may we find ourselves with hearts that sing
of your love,

as we walk in your pathway,
with Jesus your Son, Amen.

The Last Word

Parked cars are difficult to steer.

The best thing about a hobby is that it gives you something to do while you're worrying.

"Our dog is just like one of the family."

"Really! Which one?"

"Do fish sing?"

"Only when they have musical scales."

"Your cat was making an awful noise last night."

"Yes, ever since she ate your canary, she thinks she can sing."

First Worm: "What qualities do you look for in a friend?"

Second Worm: "Someone who is down-to-earth."

Puzzle

Take your house number and double it. Add five. multiply by 50, then add your age (if you're under 100). Add the number of days in a year and subtract 615. The last two figures will be your age the others will be your house number.

—Morris Mandel

Madness takes its toll; please have exact change ...

Would the Standing Committee please sit down?

Pontius' Puddle

I'M SORRY. THAT COVENANT OF YOURS EXPRESSLY FORBIDS DESTROYING THE WHOLE EARTH WITH FLOOD, BUT I DID FIND A LOOPHOLE THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SOAK THE BEJEEBERS OUT OF WOLLONGONG!



Introduce Your Friends to an Australian Christian

THE AUSTRALIAN
Christian

YOUR
YOUR
YOUR
SELVES
SELVES
IMAGE

We would be happy to send them three issues on a trial basis. Simply fill in their details below (with their permission) and send this form to, The Australian Christian, PO Box 101, North Essendon Vic 3041.

Name

Address

Postcode